

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 02847 190829Z

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ACTION NEA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

INFO USDEL ASWAN IMMEDIATE

USINFO IMMEDIATE

SECSTATE WASHDC 2808

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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JERUSALEM FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

USINFO FOR IOP/M

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION--SECRETARY'S MID-EAST TRIP

FROM MAESTRONE

1. LEADING FRONTPAGE HEADLINES IN AL AKHBAR AND AL GOMHOURIYA ON MARCH 19 STRESS SADAT'S "FIRMNESS" ABOUT REJECTION OF ISRAELI PROPOSALS TO END STATE OF BELLIGERENCY. AL AHRAH'S HEADLINES QUOTE SADAT AS SAYING THAT "OVERALL SETTLEMENT AND FULL PEACE" IN ME ARE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS TO ACHIEVE.

2. ALL PAPERS PUBLISH TEXT OF SADAT-KISSINGER PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING TUESDAY MEETING AND PRIOR TO SECRETARY'S DEPARTURE FOR TEL AVIV. AL AHRAH'S HAMDI FOUAD LEADS HIS REPORT WITH SADAT'S UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 CAIRO 02847 190829Z

STATEMENT THAT IT IS FUTILE TO DISCUSS ISRAELI CALL FOR ENDING

STATE OF BELLIGERENCY AS LONG AS THERE IS SINGLE ISRAELI SOLDIER ON ARAB LANDS AND PALESTINIAN PROBLEM REMAINS UNSOLVED. SADAT, ACCORDING TO AL AHRAH'S STROY, FURTHER TOLD NEWSMEN THAT NO AGREEMENT HAS YET BEEN REACHED ON DISENGAGEMENT OF FORCES. "HOW CAN WE THEN TALK ABOUT ENDING STATE OF BELLIGERENCY," HE WONDERED. ENDING SUCH STATE WOULD MEAN "OPEN INVITATION TO ISRAELIS TO REMAIN ON OUR LANDS," HE EXPLAINED. AL AHRAH'S STROY ALSO QUOTE SECRETARY'S STATED "DETERMINATION TO STAY IN REGION UNTIL AGREEMENT IS REACHED OR UNTIL IT BECOMES CLEAR TO HIM THAT REACHING AGREEMENT IS IMPOSSIBLE." WHEN ASKED ABOUT UNIFIED ARAB DELEGATION TO GENEVA, ALL PRESS REPORTED KISSINGER SAID HE DID NOT HAVE TIME TO DISCUSS THIS POSSIBILITY, BUT INDICATED WHEN TIME CAME TO INVITE PARTICIPANTS TO GENEVA CONFERENCE, SPECIFIC ITEMS COULD BE DISCUSSED.

3. STORY BY AL AKHBAR'S MAHA ABDEL FATTAH REFLECTS SADAT'S CRITICISM OF PRESS QUESTIONS DEALING WITH FUTURE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS "AS IF FULL WITHDRAWAL HAS ACTUALLY TAKEN PLACE." IN SEPARATE ITEM, AL AKHBAR REPORTS U.S. SPOKESMAN'S STATEMENT ON SECRETARY'S ATTEMPTS TO BRIDGE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI DIFFERENCES AND HIS VIEW THAT AGREEMENT IS POSSIBLE DURING CURRENT TRIP. MAIN STORIES IN AL AHRAH AND AL GOMHOURIYA ALSO CITE SAME VIEWS.

4. IN AL GOMHOURIYA, HODA TEWFIK QUOTES SADAT'S VIEW THAT CURRENT TALKS ARE FACING DIFFICULTIES AND THAT NO AGREEMENT ON PRINCIPAL POINTS HAS BEEN REACHED. TEWFIK ALSO SAYS PRESENT TALKS REACHED CRITICAL STATE AND THAT EGYPT, FROM VERY BEGINNING, WAS NOT "RUSHING HEAD OVER HEELS" TO CONCLUDE ANY AGREEMENT ON NEW DISENGAGEMENT WHICH DOES NOT TALLY WITH LIMITS TO WHICH EGYPT COMMITTED HERSELF.

5. BOTH AL GOMHOURIYA AND AL AHRAH FRONTPAGE SINGLE COLUMN REPORTS ON BREZHNEV'S BUDAPEST STATEMENT THAT GENEVA CONFERENCE IS BEST MEANS FOR JUST AND LASTING PEACE. AN ITEM IN AL AKHBAR REPORTS STATEMENT BY PLO REPRESENTATIVE IN LONDON THAT "ULTIMATE GOAL IS ESTABLISHMENT OF ONE STATE IN PALESTINE, BUT THIS WILL NOT BE ACHIEVED DURING OUR LIFE." "I DOUBT THAT ARMED STRUGGLE AGAINST ISRAEL IS BEST MEANS TO BE FOLLOWED." HE DID NOT REFER TO JERUSALEM.

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PAGE 03 CAIRO 02847 190829Z

6. PAPERS ALSO COVER SECRETARY'S ARRIVAL IN TEL AVIV WITH DRFINITE EGYPTIAN REPLY TO ISRAELI IDEAS WHICH WILL BE LEFT TO ISRAEL TO CONSIDER UNTIL SECRETARY RETURNS FROM ONE DAY VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA. AL AHRAH, IN ADDITION, CITES SECRETARY AS SAYING THAT FUNDAMENTAL DISAGREEMENTS STILL OBSTRUCT AGREEMENT ON FURTHER WITHDRAWAL FROM SINAI. AL GOMHOURIYA QUOTES ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER AS SAYING THAT ISRAEL SEEKS "POSITIVE CHANGE IN RELATIONS WITH EGYPT IN RETURN FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM PART OF SINAI.

7. WITHOUT COMMENT, AL AHAM QUOTES WIRE SERVICE REPORTS FROM TEL AVIV WHICH REFER TO HAARETZ STORY WHICH SPOKE OF EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI DIFFERENCES, MENTIONED FREQUENTLY IN PAST, ON A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

1. ISRAELI WANTS PLEDGE TO END STATE OF BELLIGERENCY WITHOUT TIME LIMIT AND AGREEMENT VALID FOR 8 YEARS; EGYPT REJECTS ENDING STATE OF BELLIGERENCY AND PROPOSES PERIOD OF AGREEMENT OF 18 MONTHS.

2. ISRAEL CALLS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF AGREEMENT INCLUDING ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL NINE MONTHS AFTER ITS SIGNING; EGYPT CALLS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF AGREEMENT IMMEDIATELY AFTER SIGNING.

3. ISRAEL CALLS FOR ENDING OF BOYCOTT BY EGYPT; EGYPT DOES NOT SHOW READINESS TO DO SO.

4. ISRAEL CALLS FOR EGYPTIAN PLEDGE NOT TO JOIN SYRIA IN EVENT OF RESUMPTION OF MILITARY OPERATIONS; EGYPT, ON OTHER HAND, IS OF OPINION THAT AGREEMENT WOULD BE NULL AND VOID IN EVENT OF ISRAELI ATTACK AGAINST SYRIA.

8. EDITORIALY, AL AHAM'S LEFT LEANING EDITORIALIST MOHAMED SID AHMED CLAIMS THAT EGYPT WILL NOT GIVE UP SINAI. HE REFERS TO DISCUSSIONS WITH "U.S. STRATEGIC EXPERTS" ABOUT ISRAELI READINESS TO RETURN SINAI TO EGYPT IF ISRAEL IS ALLOWED TO INSTALL BASES IN STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT SPOTS UNTIL NORMAL RELATIONS ARE ESTABLISHED.

9. PRESS SPECULATES SECRETARY MAY NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE LATIN AMERICAN TRIP BY APRIL 6.

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PAGE 04 CAIRO 02847 190829Z

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